

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



April 15, 2010

Lynden Armstrong
Chief Clerk
Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
305 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

On behalf of the American Institute of Architects, I would like to request that the attached statement be included in the record of the Committee's April 15, 2010 hearing on "The Nomination of Stephen T. Ayers as Architect of the Capitol."

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-626-7438 or agoldberg@aia.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "AG", written in a cursive style.

Andrew L. Goldberg
Senior Director, Federal Relations



**STATEMENT OF
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**

***“The Nomination of Stephen T. Ayers to
be Architect of the Capitol”***

**UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON RULES & ADMINISTRATION**

**APRIL 15, 2010
301 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING**

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Introduction

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is the leading professional membership association for the nation's licensed architects, emerging professionals, and allied partners. Since 1857, the AIA has served as the voice of the architecture profession and represents more than 80,000 member architects and allied professionals through nearly 300 chapters in the United States and around the world.

The AIA strongly supports President Obama's nomination of Stephen T. Ayers, AIA, LEED AP, as the next Architect of the Capitol and recommends that the Committee favorably report his nomination to the Senate.

History and Role of the Architect of the Capitol

The Architect of the Capitol is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the buildings committed to his care by Congress. Permanent authority for the care and maintenance of the United States Capitol was established by the Act of August 15, 1876 (19 Stat. 147; 40 U.S.C. 162–163). The Architect's duties include the mechanical and structural maintenance of the building, the upkeep and improvement of the Capitol grounds – which include the Capitol, the congressional office buildings, the Library of Congress buildings, the Supreme Court building, the U.S. Botanical Garden, the Capitol Power Plant, and numerous other facilities – and the arrangement of inaugural and other ceremonies held in the building or on the grounds.

The Architect of the Capitol also serves on the U.S. Capitol Police Board, the Capitol Guide Board, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Washington, D.C., Zoning Commission, and the National Capitol Memorial Commission, as well as a number of other boards in Washington, D.C. The Architect's role for these posts is to provide professional perspectives on historic preservation, aesthetics, health and safety on any decisions made by these important boards.

Dr. William Thornton, whose design for the Capitol was selected by President George Washington after a national architectural competition, served as the first Architect of the Capitol. Until 1989, the position of Architect of the Capitol was filled by a presidential appointment for an indefinite term. During the 19th

Century, some of the world's most prominent architects served as Architect of the Capitol, including Benjamin Latrobe, Charles Bulfinch, and Thomas U. Walter, FAIA (who also served as second president of the AIA).

During the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt, however, the Architect of the Capitol became more of a political appointee than a member of the architecture profession. Throughout the 20th Century, architects were passed over as career bureaucrats and engineers were appointed to the post. This trend continued until President Nixon appointed licensed architect George White, FAIA, to be Architect of the Capitol in 1971. Mr. White was an AIA Vice President at the time of his appointment and served until his retirement in 1997.

In 1989, Congress changed the method by which the Architect of the Capitol is appointed. Congress enacted legislation that established a congressional advisory commission tasked with selecting at least three nominees from which the President chooses his appointee to the post. Upon confirmation by the Senate, the Architect becomes an official of the Legislative Branch as an officer and agent of Congress; he is eligible for reappointment after completion of his term.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton nominated Alan Hantman, FAIA, as Architect of the Capitol. Upon his confirmation by the Senate, Mr. Hantman served until his retirement in 2007.

The U.S. Capitol is a unique historical structure that must be protected from the slow erosion of time, as well from threats by those who would make a symbolic strike at our system of government. The Capitol and its grounds serve as both a workspace for members of Congress and Congressional committees, boards and support staffs, as well as a major tourist attraction for visitors from around the world.

Qualifications for Architect of the Capitol

The AIA believes any viable candidate for the Architect of the Capitol position should possess a number of attributes. While professionals in other fields possess some of these skills, only licensed professional architects can possess all of them. These abilities include:

- Experience in managing large facilities and teams of professionals from many disciplines while overseeing complex schedules and tight budgets.
- Significant skills in diplomatically resolving issues presented by elected officials.
- Consummate design/architecture skills
- Detailed knowledge of the most recent advances to building security, sustainability and safety technologies
- Knowledge of the science and preservation of historic structures

Architects are the primary individuals who work with building owners to ensure that structures are designed, constructed and renovated in ways that meet the owner's preferences. They work with their clients to identify those parameters that are critical to the safe, secure, cost-efficient, and productive use of the structures under their care. By virtue of their licensure, architects are charged with protecting the health, safety and welfare of the occupants of the structures they design. Architects are the sole professionals able to balance cost, safety, security, and design requirements to produce a structure that is satisfying to the building owner.

In addition to the extensive training and testing involved with achieving licensure, architects learn, both in the classroom and during professional apprenticeships, how to manage multi-disciplinary teams that design, build and renovate buildings and lead the design and construction process from the initial drawings through completion and operations. Architects also are required in most states, as well as by the AIA as a condition of membership, to complete continuing education requirements on a regular basis; much of this continuing education is focused on advanced technologies and materials that achieve health, safety, security and sustainability goals.

Over the next decade, the Architect of the Capitol will be responsible for managing a nearly 15 million square foot campus, oversee major renovations to existing historic structures, improve the energy efficiency of the complex, enhance the security of the Capitol and its occupants, and improve working conditions for legislators and their staff.

Without question, the Capitol and its campus are among our most cherished national treasures. Any future renovations or new construction to be executed must consider the national significance of the structures and their surroundings. The federal government is increasingly looking to design and build high performance buildings, defined in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (P.L.110–140) as “building[s] that integrate and optimize on a life cycle basis all major high performance attributes, including energy conservation, environment, safety, security, durability, accessibility, cost-benefit, productivity, sustainability, functionality, and operational considerations.” The planning and design capabilities of a licensed architect are critical to integrating all of these functions into some of the most historically prized buildings in our Republic, all the while assuring that the business of America’s legislature and judiciary is not disrupted.

For these reasons, the AIA has consistently stated that the Architect of the Capitol must be a licensed, professional architect.

Record of Stephen T. Ayers, AIA, LEED AP, as Acting Architect of the Capitol

Mr. Ayers has served as the Acting Architect of the Capitol for the last three years. In that time, he has ably and successfully managed the Office of the Architect, guiding the Office to achieve many notable milestones and achievements. These include:

- Meeting the completion cost and schedule of the Capitol Visitor Center, which welcomed 2.3 million guests in the first year of operation
- Successfully leading various components of the 56th Presidential Inaugural, including the construction of the platform
- Completing a Collective Bargaining Agreement with AFSCME Local 626, representing 500 employees
- Taking a leadership role in implementing sustainable practices on Capitol Hill, including opening an ethanol (E-85) fueling station and doubling tonnage of recycled waste
- Signing an MOU with the U.S. Small Business Administration to promote the use of small business programs

- Maintaining a more than 90 percent customer satisfaction rating from the annual Building Services Customer Satisfaction Surveys, with this number growing annually
- Maintaining a 97.5 percent customer satisfaction rating for the 197 Congressional office moves his Office has completed
- Implementing innovative management strategies, including new telework and flexible work programs, that have raised employee job satisfaction by 20 percent

Mr. Ayers has received significant praise for his achievements from members of Congress and stakeholders both on and off Capitol Hill, and under his leadership the Office has won numerous honors and awards. He has shown a special understanding of the need to balance safety, security, sustainability, accessibility and the preservation of historic structures in his approach to the design, construction, maintenance, and renovation of Capitol Complex facilities and grounds.

Mr. Ayers' experience in facilities management, his natural leadership abilities, and the skills he brings through his education and licensure as an architect, all contribute to his proven ability to serve the United State Congress – and by extension the nation – as steward of the U.S. Capitol and its grounds and facilities.

Conclusion

The Architect of the Capitol is not only charged with managing the Capitol facilities and grounds, but supervising over two centuries' worth of American artistic and architectural heritage. Mr. Ayers has demonstrated through his leadership and service over the past three years that he has the characteristics and qualifications necessary to lead the office of the Architect of the Capitol into the next decade.

For these reasons, the AIA asks for Mr. Ayers' nomination to be swiftly approved by the Committee and the full Senate.